

DEVIZES RURAL DISTRICT
COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer
of Health
FOR 1949

G. H. H. MAYLOR, M.B., D.P.H., (Lond.)
Medical Officer of Health for the Devizes Rural District

DEVIZES RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1949

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Reynolds and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit herewith my Annual Report on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of your District for the year 1949.

I have the honour to be,

Your Obedient Servant,

G. H. H. WAYLEN,

Medical Officer of Health.

Browfort, Devizes.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area in Acres—63,515.

Population as Estimated by the Registrar-General—

| | |
|----------|--------|
| Civilian | 13,540 |
| Total | 15,150 |

Number of inhabited houses—3,541.

Rateable Value—£64,507.

Product of a penny rate—£269 (estimated).

VITAL STATISTICS.

| | Male. | Female. | Total. |
|---|-------|---------|--------|
| Live Births | 95 | 101 | 196 |
| Legitimate | 91 | 98 | 189 |
| Illegitimate | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Stillbirths | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Legitimate | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Illegitimate | — | — | — |
| Live Birth Rate | | | 14.5 |
| Live Birth Rate for England and Wales | | | 16.7 |
| Number of Deaths from all causes ...° | 70 | 71 | 141 |
| Crude Death Rate | | | 10.4 |
| Crude Death Rate for England and Wales | | | 11.7 |
| Deaths of Infants under one year ... | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Legitimate | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Illegitimate | 1 | — | 1 |
| Infant Mortality Rate | | | 49.6 |
| Infant Mortality Rate for England and Wales | | | 32 |
| Maternal Mortality Rate | | | Nil |

CAUSES OF DEATH AS RETURNED BY REGISTRAR GENERAL 1949.

| | | | Male. | Female. | Total. |
|----------------|---|-----|-------|---------|--------|
| 1 | Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers... | ... | — | — | — |
| 2 | Cerebro Spinal Fever ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 3 | Scarlet Fever ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 4 | Whooping Cough ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 5 | Diphtheria ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 6 | Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ... | ... | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 7 | Tuberculosis—Other Forms ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 8 | Syphilitic Diseases ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 9 | Influenza ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 10 | Measles ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 11 | Acute Poliomyelitis and Polio Encephalitis ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 12 | Acute Infective Encephalitis ... | ... | — | 1 | 1 |
| 13 | Cancer of Buccal Cavity, Œsophagus (M) and Uterus (F) ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 14 | Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15 | Cancer of Breast ... | ... | — | 6 | 6 |
| 16 | Cancer of all other sites ... | ... | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| 17 | Diabetes ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 18 | Intercranial Vascular Lesions ... | ... | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| 19 | Heart Diseases ... | ... | 19 | 22 | 41 |
| 20 | Other Diseases of Circulatory System ... | ... | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 21 | Bronchitis ... | ... | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 22 | Pneumonia ... | ... | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| 23 | Other Respiratory Diseases ... | ... | 1 | — | 1 |
| 24 | Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum ... | ... | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| 25 | Diarrhœa—under two years ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 26 | Appendicitis ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 27 | Other Digestive Diseases ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 28 | Nephritis ... | ... | — | 6 | 6 |
| 29 | Puerperal and Post Abortional Sepsis ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 30 | Other Maternal Causes ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 31 | Premature Birth ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| 32 | Congenital Malformations, Birth Injuries, and Infantile Diseases ... | ... | 3 | — | 3 |
| 33 | Suicide ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 34 | Road Traffic Accidents ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 35 | Other Violent Causes ... | ... | — | — | — |
| 36 | All Other Causes ... | ... | 6 | 7 | 13 |
| All Causes ... | | | 70 | 71 | 141 |

Satisfactory features are:—

- (1) Absence of deaths in childbirth.
- (2) Absence of deaths from any of the common notifiable diseases.

Five deaths occurred from Respiratory Tuberculosis, one from acute Poliomyelitis, one from acute Infantile Encephalitis.

Cancer accounted for 26 (18%) and Cardio Vascular Lesions for 62 (44%) of recorded deaths.

Yearly variations have little significance when dealing with such small numbers.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Medical Officer of Health—G. H. H. Waylen, M.B., D.P.H., Cantab.

Chief Sanitary Inspector (also Surveyor and Water Engineer)—G. E. Williams, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.

Additional Sanitary Inspector—V. C. S. Robey, M.S.I.A.

Housing Inspector—E. C. Bishop.

HOSPITALS.

Isolation Hospital.

This hospital closed down in July, 1949. Infectious cases needing hospital treatment were subsequently admitted to Chippenham or Bath City Isolation Hospitals. At the close of the year, these buildings had received some repair but were not ready for use as a new Maternity Hospital.

This hospital was opened in October, 1905, and took in the "Fever" cases from the Devizes and Pewsey areas. My father was appointed its first Medical Officer, which post he held for 27 years, giving it up in 1932 when I succeeded him. To the day of his death he had happy memories of a happy place. So have I now; the work was varied, interesting and rewarding. Others than its Medical Officers share such memories, I feel sure.

Cases admitted January—July, 1949, inclusive.

| Diseases | Borough | Devizes R.D. | Pewsey R.D. | Other Dis- tricts | Mili- tary | Total |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------|
| Scarlet Fever | 4 | 7 | — | — | — | 11 |
| Glandular Fever | — | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| Chicken Pox | — | — | 1 | — | — | 1 |
| Influenza | — | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| Measles | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | 2 |
| Mumps | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | 2 |
| Whooping Cough | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | 2 |
| Tonsillitis | 2 | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| Poliomyelitis | — | 1 | — | — | — | 1 |
| Observation | 5 | 2 | — | — | — | 7 |
| Totals | 13 | 13 | 2 | 2 | — | 30 |

Devizes and District Hospital.

The need for increased office accommodation to cope with the requirements under the new arrangements has been met by a new building erected at the entrance to the Hospital. This released space for two additional beds and a Surgical Sisters' Duty Room.

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Available beds | 60 |
| Average occupied beds ... | 40-45 |
| Total admissions | Over 1,000 (1,032) |
| Operations | Nearly 700 (696) |
| Out Patients' attendances ... | Over 25,000 (25,305) |

Plans for a new Out-Patients' Department have been approved by the Ministry of Health, but are held up and the starting date is still awaited.

Nursing.

It is still difficult to obtain adequate numbers of fully qualified nurses. Some Assistant Nurses, i.e., persons with some previous nursing experience or with two years' training only, have been available. Orderlies, male and female, quite untrained, are taking the place of Student Nurses. The differential rates of pay between Student Nurses (£200 p.a.) (i.e., £100 and all found) and Orderlies £4/5 14s. od. according to sex and hours of work, enrolled Assistant Nurses (£285-£385) and fully trained Staff Nurses is marked. The untrained student classes get salaries out of proportion to their real value, whilst there is little incentive to attract the girl of good education and background into the profession. Without a high standard of nursing, neither costly equipment, administrative efficiency, nor the skill of medical and surgical staffs will by themselves produce the hospitals within which we should all wish to be treated if ill.

MATERNITY SERVICES.

From your district 72 confinements were conducted at home and 51 in Hospital; a limited number at Ivy House, Devizes, and the remainder elsewhere.

The need for maternity beds in this area is in no wise lessening. The sooner the vacant beds at the old Isolation Hospital are put to effective use the better.

TUBERCULOSIS.

| AGE GROUP | NOTIFICATIONS | | | | DEATHS | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----|---------------|----|-----------|----|---------------|----|
| | Pulmonary | | Non-Pulmonary | | Pulmonary | | Non-Pulmonary | |
| | M. | F. | M. | F. | M. | F. | M. | F. |
| 0 — 10 | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 10 — 15 | — | 1 | 1 | — | — | — | — | — |
| 15 — 25 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 25 — 35 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 35 — 45 | 1 | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| 45 — 65 | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — |
| Over 65 | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — |
| TOTALS | 3 | 1 | 2 | — | 2 | 3 | — | — |

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

| IMMUNISATION IN RELATION TO CHILD POPULATION | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Number of Children who had completed a full course of immunisation at any time up to 31st December, 1949. | | | | | | | | |
| Age at 31/12/49, i.e. born in year | Under 1 1949 | 1 1948 | 2 1947 | 3 1946 | 4 1945 | 5 to 9 1940/44 | 10 to 14 1935/39 | Total under 15 |
| Number immunised | 9 | 96 | 139 | 122 | 117 | 774 | 811 | 2068 |
| Estimated mid-year population 1949 | Children under 5 1047 | | | | | Children 5 - 14 1937 | | 2984 |

To have close on 70% of child population immunised should give valuable protection to the community at large.

AMBULANCE SERVICES, HOME NURSING SERVICES, CLINICS.

All under the Wilts County Council and reported on by the County M.O.H.

HOUSING.

Number of houses completed during the year 1949: By Local Authority, 48; by Private Enterprise, 13.

Number of houses under construction at end of year: By Local Authority, 18; by Private Enterprise, 7.

All private enterprise houses completed or begun were single dwellings, mainly in different parishes.

Sites were purchased during the year in six parishes:—

| | |
|-----------|------------|
| Marden | Poulshot |
| Chirton | Urchfont |
| Easterton | Worton (2) |

A change of Architect at the beginning of the year caused unavoidable delay in the start of your 1949 allocation, for which contracts were completed towards the end of the year.

In December, 1949, the estimated number of houses required to meet the present needs of your district was approximately 500 (510): Half (244) for immediate needs, and half (266) to replace unfit (Category 5) houses when possible.

Future programmes should proceed steadily and smoothly, provided you continue to look ahead, acquire sites, and plan advance layouts, etc., in good time.

To-day, neither the number of houses for which sanction is obtained, nor their rates of construction from start to finish meet demand. A beginning of "Slum Clearance," so urgently needed, remains a hope only. When this becomes possible the provision of cheaper houses, on smaller and less elaborate plans if need be, will be desirable to meet the needs of those who really cannot afford the rentals now charged for your latest patterns.

WATER.

Little progress has been made during the year on the various schemes in view.

A borehole has been sunk under the edge of the chalk escarpment at Chirton Bottom. The only existing source under your Council's control (at Great Cheverell) has not afforded the yields originally anticipated. Devizes Borough has ample sources at Shepherd's Shore and Bourton, where it is intended to sink a second borehole. The factors against making more extended use of the above are:—

- 1.—Financial, and Administrative in the absence of a Joint Board.
- 2.—The fact that the old distribution system by 8in. mains into the Borough is reaching the limit of its capacity, and water drawn off at the south-west end to supply villages in the valley below has a lowering effect on the pressures within certain areas of the Borough out of proportion to the actual volume taken, especially at peak hours. None the less, the water is there now, not waiting to be opened up some years ahead. Meanwhile, water is badly needed in your area. The deductions to be drawn are obvious.

SEWERAGE.

1.—At Potterne work has begun on a scheme to sewer a portion of this Parish, and sanction to proceed with the remainder was asked for from the Ministry of Health.

2.—No progress was made on schemes for sewerage the remaining 22 parishes.

Three factors appear to obstruct sewerage schemes getting under way:—

- (1) National financial stringency.
- (2) Inadequate water supplies.
- (3) The refusal of owners to part with suitable land for disposal works.

The most urbanised area in your district is the Market and West Lavington area.

It has been impossible to acquire land here for sewerage.

It does not help that the Ministry of Health will not approve any scheme until the Local Authority can assure them it can purchase the requisite land at reasonable cost.

Your Consulting Engineers were instructed in March, 1949, to prepare detailed plans for sewerage Easterton, Market and West Lavington. Such plans were not forthcoming by the year's end.

Sanitary Inspector's Report, 1949

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Reynolds and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit herewith my Annual Report in conjunction with your Medical Officer of Health. The report includes some particulars of my duties as Water Engineer and Building Surveyor, which I have included, as they have a direct bearing on public health matters.

HOUSING.

Little progress was made in regard to the repair of defective and insanitary houses to make them in all respects fit for human habitation. Government policy and controls are indeed directed to apply the brake on repairs and improvements to houses with a view to securing that the greater part of the output of the building trade is spent on the erection of new dwellings. Those sections of the Housing Act, 1949, which deal with Improvement Grants are virtually rendered ineffective, for the present at least, by reason of the fact that the quota allowed under the Building Licensing Regulations is barely sufficient to carry out the most urgent repairs. Without doubt an important contribution can be made to the housing problem through the operation of the improvement grant sections of the Housing Act, 1949, in course of time and when the more urgent housing needs have been met,

Notwithstanding the present very difficult position, houses are inspected upon complaint, and the owners are requested by informal action to carry out the most urgent items of repairs.

It is becoming increasingly necessary to re-house those people who live in dwellings which had demolition orders made on them prior to 1940, as the owners are unwilling to incur expenditure on any repairs. The time is rapidly approaching when these very insanitary houses must be pulled down.

WATER SUPPLY.

Area Supplied.

Of the 24 Parishes in the District, eight only are totally served by the Council's main, and four partially served.

Part of two other Parishes are served from the Devizes Borough supply and parts of three others by private mains only. The following table shows the position in regard to the availability of piped water supplies:—

| Parish | No. of Houses Supplied | | Population Supplied | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| | Direct | Standpipe | Direct | Standpipe |
| From R.D. Supply | | | | |
| Bromham | 77 | — | 270 | — |
| Easterton | 15 | — | 53 | — |
| Great Cheverell ... | 82 | — | 287 | — |
| Little Cheverell ... | 18 | — | 63 | — |
| Market Lavington ... | 263 | — | 921 | — |
| Marston | 38 | — | 133 | — |
| Potterne | 216 | 11 | 755 | 40 |
| Poulshot | 53 | — | 186 | — |
| Rowde | 143 | 5 | 500 | 18 |
| Seend | 195 | 22 | 683 | 77 |
| West Lavington ... | 38 | — | 133 | — |
| Worton | 82 | — | 287 | — |
| | 1,220 | 38 | 4,271 | 135 |
| From other sources | | | | |
| Roundway* | 40 | — | 1,600 | — |
| West Lavington ... | 80 | — | 280 | — |
| Bishop's Cannings ... | 71 | 8 | 228 | 30 |
| Erlestoke | 35 | — | 123 | — |
| Easterton | 6 | — | 25 | — |
| Grand Total ... | 1,440 | 46 | 6,457 | 165 |

* This includes the Roundway Hospital.

The number of connections made to domestic consumers during the year was 93.

The remainder of the district depends on wells, many of which are shallow and the water is of doubtful quality and quantity.

Quality.

The quality of water supplied by the Council continues to be satisfactory as evidenced by the results of samples taken set out below.

Great Cheverell Public Supply.

| Date. | Before or After Chlorination. | Result. |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. 2.49 | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |
| 17. 5.49 | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |
| 4. 8.49. | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |
| 4. 8.49 | After | Chemical Satisfactory |
| 28. 7.49 | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |
| 28. 7.49 | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |
| 28. 7.49 | Before | Bacteriological Fair |
| 31.10.49 | Before | Bacteriological Fair |
| 31.10.49 | After | Bacteriological Satisfactory |

Quantity.

Amount of Water Supplied 1949.

| Month. | Devizes Borough. | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Great Cheverell. | Fairway. | Dunkirk. |
| January | 1,466,600 | Nil | 1,708,000 |
| February | 1,600,700 | 434,000 | 1,445,000 |
| March | 2,204,300 | 1,098,000 | 1,053,000 |
| April | 2,161,700 | 611,300 | 915,000 |
| May | 2,015,600 | 486,900 | 853,000 |
| June | 2,090,200 | 657,350 | 933,000 |
| July | 1,921,600 | 1,022,300 | 1,193,000 |
| August | 1,853,500 | 590,900 | 1,449,000 |
| September | 1,651,400 | 774,740 | 98,930 |
| October | 1,737,400 | 509,860 | 1,059,950 |
| November | 1,751,200 | 547,900 | 963,150 |
| December | 1,964,900 | 562,600 | 1,066,400 |
| Totals | 22,419,100 | 7,295,850 | 12,737,430 |
| Supplied from Great Cheverell Borehole | 22,419,100 Galls. | | |
| Supplied from Devizes Borough ... | ... | 20,033,280 Galls. | |
| Total supplied during 1949 ... | ... | 42,452,380 Galls. | |

The quantity of water abstracted from the Council's own source continues to be insufficient. The yield of the boreholes is showing a gradual decrease. Thus with a continually increasing demand and a decreasing source it became necessary to have a further link at the Potterne extremity of the system with the Devizes Borough supply. This work was completed during the year and afforded much needed relief. The scheme is in the nature of an expedient, pending the development of some of the Council's post-war schemes.

A small extension of the Great Cheverell system was made in West Lavington to supply the Housing Estate at Sandfield, including other properties en route.

POST-WAR SCHEMES.

Scheme No. 1 (Bulk Supply from Calne and Chippenham Area).

No progress was made during the year in regard to this scheme, as the Calne and Chippenham R.D.C. had not completed the preparation of their scheme.

Scheme No. 2 (Bulk Supply from Devizes Borough Council).

Some progress was made with regard to supplying as an interim measure two of the four parishes on this scheme, and it is hoped that work will commence early in 1951.

Scheme No. 3 (Chirton Borehole).

Here again little progress was made, owing to a succession of difficulties and unfortunate circumstances in regard to the Firm who contracted to sink the borehole.

Scheme No. 4 (The Warren).

No progress was made on this scheme. The following are results of samples taken:—

| Date. | | Result. |
|----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. 2.49 | Proposed supply | Bac. Unsatisfactory |
| 31.10.49 | „ „ | „ Unsatisfactory |

Scheme No. 5 (Augmentation of Great Cheverell Scheme from Scheme No. 4).

This scheme is dependent on Scheme No. 4.

Erlestone.

It was originally intended to supply the Parish of Erlestone from Scheme No. 5, but owing to the abandonment by the War Department of a source and pumping station it was decided to utilise this rather than wait for the development of Scheme No. 5.

Considerable progress was made in regard to the preliminaries of this Scheme, and an enquiry was held by the Ministry of Health.

The following are results of samples taken:—

| Date. | | Result. |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. 2.49 | Proposed supply | Bac. Satisfactory |
| 28. 2.49 | „ „ | „ Satisfactory |
| 17. 5.49 | „ „ | „ Fair |
| 8. 6.49 | „ „ | „ Fair |
| 28. 7.49 | „ „ | „ Fair |
| 31.10.49 | „ „ | „ Fair |

Nurstead.

The materials for the scheme to serve this hamlet from the Devizes Borough mains arrived, and it is hoped that this scheme will be completed in 1950.

WATER SCHEMES FOR COUNCIL HOUSE ESTATES NOT WITHIN REACH OF A PUBLIC SUPPLY.**All Cannings.**

This borehole was sunk in 1948, and continues to be satisfactory.

Marden.

A new borehole was sunk for this site, and has proved satisfactory: yield, 600 gallons per hour. The results of samples taken are as follows:—

| Date. | | Result. |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|
| 11. 1.49 | New Borehole | Bac. Satisfactory |
| 11. 1.49 | „ „ | Chem. Satisfactory |

Chirton.

A borehole was sunk on this site in October, and gave a yield of approximately 950 gallons per hour. Results of samples taken are as follows:—

| Date. | | Result. |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|
| 26.10.49 | New Borehole | Bac. Fair |
| 26.10.49 | " " | Chem. Satisfactory |
| 31.10.49 | " " | Bac. Satisfactory |

Urchfont.

A new borehole was sunk on this site which yielded 1,000 gallons per hour. Results of samples taken are as follows:—

| Date. | | Result. |
|----------|--------------|---------------------|
| 17.10.49 | New Borehole | Bac. Unsatisfactory |
| 17.10.49 | " " | Chem. Satisfactory |
| 1.11.49 | " " | Bac. Unsatisfactory |
| 14.11.49 | " " | Bac. Satisfactory |

Private Wells.

Bacteriological samples were taken at the following places:—

| Date | Place | Result. |
|----------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. 2.49 | Potterne (Standpipe) | Satisfactory |
| 24. 2.49 | All Cannings | Unsatisfactory |
| 20. 4.49 | Easterton (private borehole) | Fair |
| 20. 4.49 | Easterton | Fair |
| 17. 5.49 | Easterton | Unsatisfactory |
| 20. 6.49 | Bromham | Unsatisfactory |
| 28. 7.49 | Market Lavington (Broadwell) | Fair |
| 2. 8.49 | Market Lavington | Unsatisfactory |
| 24. 8.49 | Urchfont | Unsatisfactory |
| 7. 9.49 | West Lavington | Unsatisfactory |
| 8. 9.49 | Chirton | Fair |
| 5.10.49 | Etchilhampton | Unsatisfactory |
| 17.10.49 | West Lavington | Unsatisfactory |
| 1.11.49 | Easterton | Unsatisfactory |
| 1.11.49 | Wedhampton (dipping well) | Unsatisfactory |
| 24.11.49 | Urchfont | Unsatisfactory |

The above samples are for the most part from shallow and un-steined wells, and are fairly representative of what obtains in those parts of the district that have no public supply.

General Observations on Water Supply Position.

Although this is the fourth year since the termination of the war, no major scheme has reached the stage where tenders could be invited. This is regrettable. What are the reasons?

In Schme No. 1 the Calne and Chippenham R.D.C. could not obtain a satisfactory reply in regard to the future use of the Cherhill and Yatesbury boreholes which were developed during the war for the R.A.F. Stations in those places. Protracted negotiations with Govern-

ment Departments proved to be abortive. It is now proposed to obtain water from the Chippenham Borough source.

Some progress was made with Scheme No. 2, although the agreement with the Borough had not been concluded at the end of the year. Fruitless and protracted negotiations with the Ewelme Trustees for a period of two years in an endeavour to persuade them to permit boring at Chirton proved to be abortive. Fortunately a public spirited owner purchased the land and immediately gave permission. Boring was commenced during the year, but as already stated, the successful tenderers made no progress.

No progress was made on Scheme No. 4 beyond obtaining evidence of the flow of water in the Warren area. If the proposal to sink a new borehole at Great Cheverell is carried out it may not be necessary to proceed with the proposed Warren source.

SEWERAGE.

The Council are responsible for 11.19 miles of piped sewer and 4.4 miles of sewer ditch.

There is no sewage disposal works on any part of this haphazard and unsatisfactory means of dealing with foul wastes. Economic stringency will no doubt determine the impossibility of proceeding with many of the proposed post-war scheme. This should not, however, deter the Council from pressing on with acquiring land and preparing schemes. It is something to arrive at the stage where a scheme is complete on paper. Local Authorities who achieve that much score an enormous advantage over their more dilatory counterparts when economic conditions permit of the work actually being carried out.

Plans of 35 septic tanks and drainage systems for house owners and eight sewage works for 92 Council houses were approved.

The expenditure of this not inconsiderable amount of private and public monies must be set against the cost of providing public sewerage systems.

Various short lengths of defective sewer were relaid.

FOOD INSPECTION.

Particulars of food condemned as unfit for human consumption are as follows:—

| Food. | Cause. |
|----------------|------------------|
| 52 lbs. Beef | Putrefaction. |
| 20½ lbs. Bacon | Putrefaction. |
| 7½ lbs. Cheese | Mould and mites. |

Milk and Dairies.

Your Officers co-operated with the Wilts Agricultural Executive Committee Dairy Advisory Officer in endeavouring to secure an improvement in some of the difficult cases where persistent sample failures had occurred and the buildings were in an unsatisfactory state. It is anticipated that this duty will for the most part pass out of the

hands of Local Authorities to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries during 1950.

Ice Cream.

Ice cream as an article of food goes from strength to strength in sales. At the beginning of the year one producer-retailer and five retailers were registered; at the end of the year the number of retailers had increased to 17.

It is a pity that the main ingredients of what has now become an important article of food are not pure, fresh and wholesome milk and eggs.

FOOD POISONING.

There were no cases of food poisoning during the year.

REFUSE COLLECTION.

The fortnightly collection of refuse throughout the District continues to work smoothly. Occasionally, representations are made by householders that the collection should be increased to a weekly one. These are mainly from people who have been accustomed to weekly collections or who have little or no space available for the disposal of ashes and kitchen waste which some householders in Rural Districts do not put out for collection. The bulk of the refuse is disposed of at Heron Bridge where a modified system of controlled tipping is used. Controlled tipping requires large quantities of soil for its effective operation and your Officer has been able to secure considerable quantities from Council House sites in course of development, and other sources. In future this may prove to be more difficult and the cost of the service may increase through the necessity of purchasing soil.

The refuse tip at Seend has been developed in a haphazard way and is beyond redemption as a controlled tip. Crude tipping is practised at the Devizes Borough Council refuse tip at Nursteed. This large insanitary accumulation gave rise to much nuisance.

BUILDING LICENSING REGULATIONS.

Repairs.

Licences to the value of £7,246 10s. od. were issued during the year for repairs. This work still takes up a lot of the time of your officers and entails many enquiries and visits. Applicants are advised to do their repairs and maintenance work as far as possible within the free limit and in stages, as the value of applications far exceeds the permitted quota. This irksome control with its many loopholes and arbitrary rulings penalises the law abiding, and allows the less conscientious to "fiddle." The complex nature of building operations with its admixture of multiple trades and hundreds of different processed articles and raw materials must be the most difficult of all things to ration and control on a just, logical and equitable basis. Law and Authority will gain in respect as soon as these hastily improvised, rough justice controls can be abolished. In operating them one is

very forcibly reminded of the legal dictum which states that not only is it important for justice to be done, but it should manifestly be seen to be done.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING AND BUILDING BYELAWS.

One hundred and fifty-two applications were dealt with. The bewildering spate of Regulations, Orders and Circulars which followed the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, did not abate during the year.

Many of the public chafe at having to fill no less than seven long and detailed forms together with plans in quadruplicate to carry out a small addition to a house or erect a garage. It is the Officer's duty to carry out the law as it stands, but he may perhaps be excused for wondering if it is not unnecessarily fussy.

Much useful work was done in close co-operation with the County Planning Dept. in securing improved elevations, better texture and layout in accordance with the accepted canons of good design and architecture. This inevitably resulted in delay in dealing with applications, but eventually and generally applicants express gratitude for the suggestions made.

The wisdom of hastening slowly, and considering from all angles, decisions on buildings which will stand for a hundred years cannot be doubted.

Had our predecessors taken the same trouble many of our present problems would not arise.

The arrangement for the delegation of powers from the Wiltshire County Council is, in my opinion, working well and close co-operation obtained with their officers.

RODENT CONTROL.

The agreement with the Devizes Borough Council whereby both Authorities share the services of a full-time rodent operator continues to work satisfactorily. There is no doubt that the main infestations are in farms and these are the province of the W.A.E.C. The results of treatment carried out are as follow:—

| Location. | Estimated Rat Kill. | | No. of bodies found. | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| | | Rats. | | Rats. |
| Public sewers and ditches ... | | 790 | | 149 |
| Refuse tip (Seend) ... | ... | 120 | | 22 |
| Refuse tip (Heron Bridge) ... | | 100 | | 15 |
| Private properties ... | ... | 570 | | 90 |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |
| Totals ... | ... | 1,580 | | 276 |
| | | <hr/> | | <hr/> |

FACTORIES ACT.

There are 57 Factories in the district.

The general standard of cleanliness, structural condition, and provision of washing and sanitary facilities left much to be desired in some premises. Accordingly it was decided to make a special effort to secure the necessary improvement, and Mr. Robey has devoted much time and done excellent work in this respect by informal action.

The record of the work is as follows:—

| | | |
|---|--------|----|
| Inspection of Factories (other than Bakehouses) | ... | 44 |
| Inspection of Bakehouses | | 52 |

Total 96

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|------------------|-----|
| Insufficient Sanitary Accommodation | 5 | Remedied | 3 |
| | | Scheme submitted | 2 |
| Unclean Sanitary Accommodation | ... 1 | Remedied | 1 |
| Structural alterations to Bakehouse | ... 1 | „ | 1 |
| Repairs & Ventilation to Bakehouse | ... 1 | „ | 1 |
| New Floor to Bakehouse | 1 | „ | 1 |
| Ventilation to Bakehouse | 1 | „ | 1 |
| Defective Bakehouse Floor | 1 | „ | Nil |
| Unclean Walls and Ceiling | 9 | „ | 9 |
| Unsatisfactory Water Supply | ... 1 | „ | 1 |

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

Licences were issued for six individual dwellings and two sites.

Moveable dwellings, fortunately, are not a problem in this area as they are in some districts.

COMPLAINTS.

The following table shows the position in regard to complaints made to your officers either verbally or by correspondence:—

| Type of Complaint. | Number. | Reme- died. | Out- standing. | No action necessary. |
|---|---------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Housing (excluding Council Houses) | 24 | 13 | 6 | 5 |
| Keeping of Animals | 6 | 4 | | 2 |
| Drains, sewers and ditches | 47 | 34 | 9 | 4 |
| Disposal of night soil | 3 | 3 | | |
| Bakehouses | 2 | 2 | | |
| Dirty and infested | 2 | 2 | | |
| Sanitary Accommodation | 4 | 3 | 1 | |
| Water Supply | 14 | 12 | | 2 |
| Refuse Accumulations | 7 | 7 | | |
| Factories | 2 | 2 | | |
| Not within the Council's jurisdiction | 5 | | | |
| Total | 116 | 82 | 16 | 13 |

SUMMARY OF INSPECTIONS.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Housing | ... | ... | ... | ... | 143 |
| Nuisances | ... | ... | ... | ... | 113 |
| Building | ... | ... | ... | ... | 231 |
| Drains | ... | ... | ... | ... | 92 |
| Sewerage | ... | ... | ... | ... | 386 |
| Water Supply | ... | ... | ... | ... | 330 |
| Water Samples | ... | ... | ... | ... | 47 |
| Cowsheds Defective | ... | ... | ... | ... | 48 |
| Food | ... | ... | ... | ... | 17 |
| Food Shops | ... | ... | ... | ... | 62 |
| Bakehouses | ... | ... | ... | ... | 52 |
| Refuse | ... | ... | ... | ... | 56 |
| Workshops and Factories | ... | ... | ... | ... | 44 |
| Petroleum | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5 |
| Rodent Control | ... | ... | ... | ... | 301 |
| Council Houses | ... | ... | ... | ... | 621 |
| Town Planning | ... | ... | ... | ... | 24 |
| Miscellaneous | ... | ... | ... | ... | 84 |
| Building Licensing | ... | ... | ... | ... | 51 |
| Council House Sites | ... | ... | ... | ... | 59 |
| Fumigation | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2 |
| | | | | | <hr/> |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,768 |
| | | | | | <hr/> |

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) G. E. WILLIAMS,

Senior Sanitary Inspector.

